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Implementation of education for sustainable development

Note by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General transmits herewith the report from the Director General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) on the implementation of education for sustainable development.

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Report of the Director General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization on the implementation of education for sustainable development

Summary

At its thirty-seventh session, the General Conference of UNESCO endorsed the Global Action Programme on Education for Sustainable Development as follow-up to the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development after 2014. In its resolutions 69/211 and 70/209, the General Assembly acknowledged the Programme.

As requested by the General Assembly in resolution 70/209, the present document provides a general overview of the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 4 on education and a review of the implementation of education for sustainable development in the framework of the Global Action Programme on Education for Sustainable Development.

I. Introduction

A. Background

1. Education for sustainable development "empowers learners to take informed decisions and responsible actions for environmental integrity, economic viability and a just society, for present and future generations, while respecting cultural diversity. It is about lifelong learning, and is an integral part of quality education. Education for sustainable development is holistic and transformational education which addresses learning content and outcomes, pedagogy and the learning environment. It achieves its purpose by transforming society".[1] Education for sustainable development is an important part of Sustainable Development Goal 4 on education.

2. UNESCO, as the lead agency for education for sustainable development, coordinates the Global Action Programme on Education for Sustainable Development. On the basis of broad consultations and input from a wide range of stakeholders, the Programme was endorsed by the General Conference of UNESCO at its thirty-seventh session, in November 2013, and acknowledged by the General Assembly in its resolutions 69/211 and 70/209 as follow-up to the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development after 2014 (see A/69/76).

3. The Global Action Programme is focused on generating and scaling up action in five priority action areas (see para. 25 below). UNESCO supports partners and stakeholders, raises awareness and visibility, advocates education for sustainable development at the international level and supports member States in integrating education for sustainable development into education plans and programmes.

4. There has been growing international recognition of education for sustainable development as an integral element of quality education and a key enabler of sustainable development, as evidenced by references in key documents such as the Education 2030 Framework for Action, the United Nations Environment Assembly resolution 2/3 on environmental education, the 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns, the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway, the Paris Climate Agreement, the Cartagena Declaration (Forum of Latin American and Caribbean Ministers of Environment), the Group of 7 Kurashiki Declaration, the Batumi Ministerial Statement on Education for Sustainable Development, the Nicosia Declaration on Education for Sustainable Development and the call for action adopted by the United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14. The substantial inclusion of education for sustainable development in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development provides strong support for scaling up education for sustainable development action in the coming years.

5. Education 2030 places a spotlight on the central role of education and learning in the common pursuit of sustainable development. Its conceptual basis, socioeconomic implications and environmental and cultural connections make it an enterprise that touches on every aspect of life. It requires far-reaching changes in the way education is often practised today.

[1] See UNESCO, UNESCO Roadmap for Implementing the Global Action Programme on Education for Sustainable Development (2014). Available from http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0023/002305/230514e.pdf.

B. Outline of the present report

6. The present report is prepared in accordance with General Assembly resolution 70/209, in which the Assembly requested UNESCO to present a review of the implementation of education for sustainable development in the framework of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and of the Global Action Programme on Education for Sustainable Development at its seventy-second session. The document provides general information on the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 4 on education and an overview of education for sustainable development and the implementation of the Programme. It also contains recommendations and ways forward for education for sustainable development in the coming years.

7. The report was drafted on the basis of replies to surveys by the key partners of the Global Action Programme (90 stakeholders with extensive outreach and political influence selected by UNESCO to co-implement the Programme) and other education for sustainable development organizations and stakeholders; interviews with key informants; and the 2016 Global Education Monitoring Report, the 2016 preliminary monitoring report focusing on the Programme key partners and the 2017 mid-term report on the implementation of the Programme and information from other relevant sources, such as the Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform.

II. Addressing Sustainable Development Goal 4 on education

A. Providing quality education for all to achieve sustainable development

8. In the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, education is recognized as key to sustainable development. Through the Incheon Declaration, adopted at the 2015 World Education Forum, UNESCO, as the specialized agency for education, was entrusted to lead and coordinate the education goal with its partners. The road map for achieving the 10 targets of Sustainable Development Goal 4 ("ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all") is the Education 2030 Framework for Action, adopted in November 2015, through which guidance is provided to Governments and partners on how to implement the new education agenda and translate into practice the commitments made at the country, regional and global levels.

9. The ambitious education agenda can only be achieved if strong, inclusive, multi-stakeholder partnerships and strategic alliances are formed to ensure that the international community meets its common goal by 2030. The main responsibility for implementing the agenda lies with Governments, UNESCO and partners providing support through coordinated policy advice, technical assistance, capacity development and the monitoring of progress at the global, regional and national levels. In this regard, UNESCO has tailored its education programme to help countries to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 4 and its targets and to monitor their efforts. The focus is on supporting the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 4 at the country level and leading the coordination and monitoring of the implementation at the global and regional levels.

10. UNESCO has set up a number of partnerships and coordination mechanisms at the global, regional and national levels to support the implementation of the new education agenda. At the global level, the Sustainable Development Goal-Education 2030 Steering Committee, an inclusive, high-level, multi-stakeholder coordination

mechanism convened by UNESCO, was set up. Its main objective is to support countries and partners to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 4 and the education-related targets of the 2030 Agenda through strategic guidance, monitoring, partnerships, advocacy and the harmonization of partner activities. At the regional level, regional and subregional partner groups/coordination mechanisms for Education 2030 have been set up in most regions (West and Central Africa, Asia and the Pacific, the Arab States, Latin America and the Caribbean). The Collective Consultation of NGOs on Education 2030 is another key mechanism to support the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 4. Other partners — in academia, the private sector, youth organizations, the media and communities — are also called upon to provide their contributions.

11. In the 2016 Global Education Monitoring Report, it was shown that, if current efforts are not greatly and immediately increased, the international community will fail to meet its goal. Key challenges for countries include the need to build capacity, a lack of data and information and a need for increased, more effective and equitable domestic funding for education. In recent years, global funding for education has clearly decreased, leading to a major funding gap.

12. The 2016 Global Education Monitoring Report also contains recommendations on how education systems can contribute more effectively to sustainable development.

(a) Collaborations and synergies across all sectors and partners have to be supported. Since systemic problems require multiple actors and diverse perspectives, stronger efforts are needed to involve all partners, including ministries, education experts and civil society, at the local and national levels and across sectors;

(b) Governments need to view formal and non-formal education and training as key to their efforts to tackle cross-sector problems. Education and lifelong learning can help build capacity in all sectors. Many Sustainable Development Goal targets require specialized skills and expertise that education systems provide;

(c) Expanding the access of marginalized groups to good-quality primary and secondary education will help to reduce income inequality and disparity. Changes to labour market regulations and technology should not penalize workers in less secure jobs, especially in the informal sector;

(d) Education systems need increased and predictable financing to universalize the completion of primary and secondary education, increase the number of qualified, knowledgeable and motivated teachers, provide good-quality education to marginalized populations and prepare for the impact of climate change, natural disasters and the possibility of protracted conflict;

(e) Improving equity in universal primary and secondary education, especially for girls, would curtail population growth, transform social norms and practices across generations and limit the burden on the planet;

(f) In developing skills policies, education systems should address both medium- and long-term needs and the implications of sustainable growth. Teaching green skills to students and providing workers with opportunities to retrain and improve their skills are needed, as are changes in secondary- and tertiary-level curricula. Better cooperation with business and industry would improve the relevance and quality of teaching and learning;

(g) Civic, peace and sustainability education programmes can be important levers for Sustainable Development Goal progress. Effectively implemented, they can ensure a more equitable justice system, build capacity in judicial and law

enforcement, foster less violent and more constructive societies, increase the understanding of the links between culture, the economy and the environment, and prioritize actions that improve prospects for future generations. This is the particular focus of target 4.7 of Sustainable Development Goal 4, which addresses education for sustainable development and related approaches, such as global citizenship education, health and well-being and sustainable lifestyles.

13. In sum, the broadened and ambitious Education 2030 agenda requires sustained and increased commitment and action by Governments and all partners in order to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities by 2030.

B. Mainstreaming a gender perspective

14. Throughout all its programmes, UNESCO is intensifying its efforts to achieve gender equality and empower women and girls (Sustainable Development Goal 5) in terms of access to education, participation in decision-making, especially in science, promotion as agents of social change, and in the fight against violence towards women.

15. UNESCO promotes gender mainstreaming and gender-specific programming in the implementation of the Global Action Programme, aligned with its Gender Equality Action Plan 2014-2021. Gender mainstreaming is being applied to fully integrate gender equality considerations into programme strategies and activities, including policy advice, advocacy, research, normative and standard-setting work, capacity development, monitoring and evaluation/assessment and any other technical assistance. UNESCO is also supporting gender-specific programmes to reduce specific inequalities faced by women, men, girls or boys in particular situations. For example:

(a) In Afghanistan, UNESCO is providing technical support to the Ministry of Education to ensure gender-responsive content in skill-based literacy workbooks in eight skills areas, including peacebuilding, life skills, health and well-being and sustainable development;

(b) In Brazil, in partnership with municipalities, UNESCO has been supporting teacher training in global citizenship education, life skills education and education for sustainable development. It is also developing, in partnership with a public television station linked to the Ministry of Education, national campaigns on these themes aimed at public school teachers;

(c) In Guatemala, UNESCO is helping the Ministry of Education to implement a national strategy for citizenship education with a gender focus. The project has strengthened the accelerated primary education programme with educational materials that include education for sustainable development;

(d) In Saudi Arabia, South Sudan, the Sudan, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia, the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning supported national authorities to scale up and develop inclusive, gender-responsive, quality literacy programmes in their national development strategies to promote peace, social cohesion and sustainable development;

(e) In Kenya, UNESCO is supporting science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) programmes for girls. Through the STEM mentorship programme, 1,000 secondary school girls have been supported in the areas of mathematics, physics, agricultural sciences, marine and ocean sciences and several fields of engineering, including electronic and telecommunications engineering, geospatial and space technology engineering and aeronautical engineering.

UNESCO also supported teacher development in the area of gender-based violence. A trainer's guide on gender-based violence in educational institutions was developed using a competency-based approach to train and equip education professionals with the knowledge, skills and attitudes to address gender-based violence effectively in schools in Kenya.

16. In these ways, UNESCO is aiming to reduce persistent gender disparities and promote gender equality in education throughout the education system, in relation to education (access, promoting safe and empowering learning environments), within education (content, teaching and learning context and practices, delivery modes and assessments) and through education (learning outcomes, life and work opportunities).

17. In the 2016 Gender Review of the Global Education Monitoring Report, six key recommendations are offered for improving how to monitor and, therefore, hold countries and organizations accountable for gender equality in education:

(a) Develop a more comprehensive set of indicators that document gender equality, going beyond the aim of parity;

(b) Systematically monitor gender norms, values and attitudes and improve access to education;

(c) Promote gender equality in institutions outside education systems through laws and policies, resource distribution and better teaching and learning practices;

(d) Encourage closer links between those working on gender equality in education and those working on gender equality overall;

(e) Form a working group and a transnational network on measuring gender equality in education to share successful strategies;

(f) Monitor practices inside the classroom: curricula, textbooks, assessments and teacher education, and include gender sensitivity assessments in classroom observation tools.

C. No country left behind

18. The 2030 Agenda shows a commitment to inclusivity ("leaving no one behind") that comprises ending poverty in all its forms and reducing poverty within and among countries. This requires giving the highest priority to supporting least developed countries and those in conflict and other special development situations. In terms of Sustainable Development Goal 4, inclusion and equity lay the foundation for quality education.

19. Armed conflict is one of the greatest obstacles to progress in education. According to the 2016 Global Education Monitoring Report, in conflict-affected countries, 21.5 million children of primary school age (35 per cent of the total) and nearly 15 million adolescents of lower secondary age (25 per cent) are out of school. The importance of education in crises is reflected in a number of targets under Sustainable Development Goal 4. In target 4.5, providing equal access to education "for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations" is discussed; in target 4.7, the role of education for the "promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence" is emphasized; and in target 4.a, the necessity for "safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all" is underlined. In recognizing that crises constitute barriers to education, in the Education 2030 Framework for Action it is stipulated that countries must "institute measures to develop inclusive, responsive and resilient

education systems to meet the needs of children, youth and adults in crisis contexts, including internally displaced persons and refugees". The importance of disaster risk reduction, peace education, emergency preparedness and response, and the protection of education institutions from violence, including gender-based violence, are also emphasized.

III. Implementing education for sustainable development

20. The Sustainable Development Goals provide a holistic framework for organizations to connect education to sustainable development. Within the Goals, education is also included in the goals on health, growth and employment, sustainable consumption and production, and climate change. Together, they all provide many entry points for education for sustainable development as a crucial component of Sustainable Development Goal 4. It is explicitly recognized as part of target 4.7, together with global citizenship education, which UNESCO promotes as a complementary approach.[2]

21. Education for sustainable development resonates across all 17 Sustainable Development Goals; knowledge and behaviours are essential for the achievement of all the Goals and their targets. The Goals are thus helpful for generating policy support for education for sustainable development and providing a shared framework for action. They also provide an opportunity to make connections between topics and create synergies across goals.

22. Because all 17 Sustainable Development Goals are interrelated and education underpins all of them, the work of UNESCO contributes significantly to their achievement[3] through an integrated approach, drawing on all its areas of expertise and in close cooperation with United Nations agencies and Global Action Programme key partners. Education for sustainable development thus serves to engage not only the education sector but also other sectors concerned with the global development agenda by demonstrating the cross-cutting value of education.

23. As a substantial contribution to Education 2030 and all the Sustainable Development Goals, the implementation of the Global Action Programme, at the national, regional and global levels, is aimed at generating and scaling up specific actions in education for sustainable development and at addressing key sustainability challenges through education.

A. Global Action Programme on Education for Sustainable Development

24. The UNESCO Global Action Programme was launched at the World Conference on Education for Sustainable Development, held in Aichi-Nagoya, Japan, in November 2014. It is focused on generating and scaling up education for sustainable development action at all levels and in all areas of education and in all sectors of sustainable development. To enable strategic focus and foster stakeholder commitment, five priority action areas were identified: advancing policy; transforming learning and training environments; building the capacity of educators and trainers; empowering and mobilizing youth; and accelerating sustainable solutions at the local level. It should be noted that many stakeholders carry out their

[2] See *Global Citizenship Education: Topics and learning objectives*, UNESCO, 2015. Available from http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0023/002329/232993e.pdf.

[3] See *UNESCO moving forward the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*. Available from http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0024/002477/247785e.pdf.

own education for sustainable development work, and Programme activities represent part of that portfolio.

25. To date, more than 520 education for sustainable development stakeholders have pledged to undertake Global Action Programme activities. The stakeholders include policymakers, institutional leaders, educators, youth, local authorities and civil society leaders representing universities, education organizations, Governments, teacher networks, United Nations agencies and others. Education for sustainable development stakeholders have made Programme launch commitments, that is, plans for specific activities in support of one or more of the five priority action areas.

26. Ninety of these stakeholders (including members of Government, civil society, United Nations agencies and academic partners) were selected as key partners and grouped into five networks. The Programme partner networks intensify synergies between the Programme activities of the key partners and catalyse further action from other education for sustainable development stakeholders. The partner networks are valuable mechanisms for creating synergies through information-sharing and coordination. They are also a helpful forum for peer-to-peer sharing and support.

27. Together with the key partners, UNESCO pursues the following expected results:

(a) Global Action Programme implementation coordinated effectively and global education for sustainable development community of practice fostered;

(b) Education for sustainable development reinforced in national and international education and sustainable development policies;

(c) Sustainability principles integrated into education and training environments;

(d) Education for sustainable development capacity of teacher training institutions enhanced;

(e) Education for sustainable development youth leaders empowered and mobilized;

(f) Education for sustainable development programmes at the local level mainstreamed.

28. In the 2017 midterm review of the implementation of the Global Action Programme, it was revealed that the key partners exceeded the targets they had set for themselves for each of the five priority action areas. The following key findings are highlighted:

(a) *Advancing policy*. Advancing policy is a foundational activity for education for sustainable development and the one in which the greatest number of key partners are engaged. Education systems are increasingly informed by education for sustainable development strategies, guidelines and frameworks. From early 2015 until the end of 2016, key partners supported the development of 432 strategic policy documents and 701 programmes, providing technical support for policy development implemented at the country level in 135 countries;

(b) *Transforming learning and training environments*. The Programme partner networks are useful for accelerating action to transform learning and training environments. Whole-school approaches are effective in providing multiple entry points for education for sustainable development activities to involve large numbers of learners. Through their collective actions, key partners supported 73,143

schools and involved 2,458,954 learners in education for sustainable development activities between early 2015 and the end of 2016;

(c) *Building capacities of educators and trainers*. Capacity in education for sustainable development can be developed through various modalities, including face-to-face training, professional exchanges and online courses, offering many ways to meet the needs of the programme beneficiaries. Key partners provided capacity-building activities to 14,873 teacher training institutions and 1,540,400 teacher educators in 2015 and 2016;

(d) *Empowering and mobilizing youth*. Key Partners recognize that youth involvement is central to the success of education for sustainable development because young people have the power to multiply programmes through their networks. They have engaged youth through policy forums, leadership training and conferences. Key partners have collectively supported 1,718,889 youth leaders and trained 626,192 youth leaders to be trainers in 2015 and 2016;

(e) *Accelerating sustainable solutions at the local level*. Local authorities are critical actors in the implementation of education for sustainable development, and network/civil society partnerships are an effective strategy for involving them because they imply that it is important to develop local communities' ownership, which can be assured in a consultative process. Key partners supported local authorities to establish 745 education for sustainable development activities or programmes and 1,192 networks/civil society organizations to conduct such activities in 2015 and 2016.

29. In addition to coordination, mobilization and advocacy of the Global Action Programme, UNESCO carries out implementation activities through joint projects in each of the priority action areas. Developed jointly by UNESCO and selected key partners, these projects solidify education for sustainable development on national agendas, and help to galvanize a shared vision and understanding of its central concepts by establishing collaboration with Governments and local authorities, transforming learning environments, building the capacities of education for sustainable development stakeholders, engaging youth and developing policies and curricula.

B. International cooperation in education for sustainable development

30. At the global level, as part of providing overall management and coordination of the Global Action Programme, UNESCO provides strategic guidance for integrating education for sustainable development and facilitates cooperation among member States and stakeholders to collaborate on joint actions, spearhead the implementation of activities and share and exchange technical expertise, outreach capacity or resources.

31. Other coordination mechanisms dedicated to specific issues support United Nations cooperation on education for sustainable development. These include, among others, the United Nations Alliance for Action on Climate Change Education, Training and Public Awareness?, the Global Alliance for Disaster Risk Reduction and Resilience in the Education Sector and the 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns, in particular, its Sustainable Lifestyles and Education programme.

32. With support from the Government of Switzerland, the One United Nations Climate Change Learning Partnership assists 16 countries in taking a strategic and results-oriented approach to climate change learning. National partners include Benin, Burkina Faso, the Dominican Republic, Ethiopia, Ghana, Indonesia, Malawi,

the Niger and Uganda. The Partnership also supports a regional programme implemented by the members of the Central American Integration System.

33. The United Nations University promotes multi-stakeholder cooperation at the local level and a global community of practice through the network of regional centres of expertise for education for sustainable development. The centres are networks of existing formal and non-formal organizations that facilitate learning about sustainable development in local communities. Across the world, 156 centres have been accredited so far. For this global network, the Global Action Programme and its implementation have provided a guiding discussion on the planning of regional activities. Centres in the Asia-Pacific region, for example, drafted a collective action plan on Programme priorities relating to the Sustainable Development Goals.

34. The United Nations Environment Programme Global Universities Partnership on Environment and Sustainability, with the involvement of universities across the world, provides a strategic and inclusive platform to share sustainability solutions, promote education for sustainable development and support the mainstreaming of environment and sustainability practices into universities. More than 570 universities across the world are currently part of this growing network.

C. Developing national capacities for education for sustainable development

35. UNESCO and its partners have supported member States to strengthen their capacities to integrate education for sustainable development into education in multiple dimensions, including policy, planning, curriculum, teaching and teachers, community-based learning and learning materials. Country-level interventions provide an important means to strengthen political commitment and the capacity to use education systematically to address global challenges. Stakeholders' involvement in the planning and implementation of activities is key to promoting and increasing the sustainability of actions and fostering linkages with other programmes.

36. This support includes providing guidance to member States on how to implement education for sustainable development and address key development issues, such as climate change, disaster risk and biodiversity. For instance, in collaboration with the secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, UNESCO published guidelines to support the national implementation of the education article of the Convention on Climate Change, including the development of national climate change education and awareness strategies.[4] To respond to the need to develop specific tools to support communication, education and public awareness with respect to biodiversity, UNESCO and the secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity jointly developed a biodiversity learning kit on the occasion of the United Nations Decade on Biodiversity (2011-2020). Furthermore, in regard to the Sustainable Development Goals, UNESCO recently released a publication, "Education for Sustainable Development Goals: Learning Objectives", on how education for sustainable development can support each of the 17 Goals.

37. The involvement of various stakeholders, in particular local governments, universities and ministries, in not only education but other sectors, and close

[4] See *Action for climate empowerment: guidelines for accelerating solutions through education, training and public awareness* (2016). Available from http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0024/002464/246435e.pdf.

cooperation and coordination among them, are some of the keys to success in whole-institution approaches and community-based actions.

38. Japan, for example, formulated a national implementation plan on education for sustainable development under the Global Action Programme, in March 2016, at an interministerial meeting on education for sustainable development, in which 11 ministries participated. The plan stipulates the actions needed to be taken by the public sector, and based on it, the country is promoting education for sustainable development with a whole-Government approach. Japan also organized an education for sustainable development round-table meeting, which involved 23 education for sustainable development experts and stakeholders, including teachers, national professional officers and academics, to review the implementation of the Programme and discuss the way forward. Many efforts are being undertaken in this context.

39. Germany, as a federal country, launched a comprehensive and participatory multi-stakeholder process to implement the Global Action Programme. The German Federal Ministry of Education and Research has established a high-level national platform, expert forums and partner networks, which bring together more than 600 representatives from politics, science, the private sector and civil society. Together, they shape and advance national implementation of the Programme. In 2017, a national action plan on education for sustainable development, which defines objectives and measures to scale up education for sustainable development in all areas and at all levels of the German education system, was adopted. Once a year, a nationwide conference for all stakeholders is held to exchange ideas, present innovative practices and accelerate activities. An award scheme highlights good practice in scaling up education for sustainable development action and illustrates how sustainability can be mainstreamed into the structures of the German education system. A national education for sustainable development monitoring process has been established and a national set of indicators for education for sustainable development will be developed.

40. Kenya, Costa Rica and Viet Nam are all supported through the Japanese fund-in-trust for education for sustainable development to implement Global Action Programme priority action area 1 on advancing policies. As a result, Kenya launched an education for sustainable development policy for the education sector in March 2017. The policy was developed through a countrywide consultative process, taking into account a nationwide stakeholder engagement already endorsed in the national development plans of Kenya for sustainable development. As a next step, the country is planning awareness-raising and capacity development for the education for sustainable development policy in its 47 counties. Education for sustainable development policies were developed in Costa Rica and are being translated into action plans with specific roll-out programmes for capacity-building. Viet Nam has developed capacity-building tools and policy briefs for education for sustainable development policy developers and implementers. A wide range of stakeholders from different ministries and sectors is involved in the formulation and implementation of education for sustainable development policies in all three countries.

41. The Korean National Commission for UNESCO has conducted research to define an education for sustainable development whole-school approach and is implementing it in UNESCO associated schools in the Republic of Korea. In 2016, the Commission supported professional learning communities of associated schools teachers, specifically addressing sustainability in curricula, teaching, pedagogy, school operations, facilities and community relations at the relevant schools. Sixteen professional learning communities benefited from the Commission's support, and 70 associated schools teachers participated in a capacity-building

workshop on the education for sustainable development whole-school approach. The results of these activities will be disseminated to all Korean associated schools as examples of good practice.

42. The Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the Swedish International Centre of Education for Sustainable Development are collaborating with UNESCO and other partners to mainstream education for sustainable development into teacher education within the SADC region. A "change project" approach has been used to enable the institutionalization of education for sustainable development in teacher education settings. The methodology is aimed at initiating changes that fulfil the aspirations of the Global Action Programme. There are currently more than 40 change projects being supported at different implementation stages.

D. Scaling up education for sustainable development

43. The theory of change uniting the Programme key partners and other stakeholders is built on the five priority action areas: to be successful, education for sustainable development needs a supportive policy environment; transformed learning environments; trained educators; mobilized youth; and locally derived solutions. Key partners implement programmes to generate change in each of these areas and collaborate with local partners to anchor education for sustainable development in communities. A comprehensive and ground-based approach is favoured.

44. Scaling up is achieved through the multiplication of activities across the partner networks, facilitated by information exchange and joint projects. The programmes of key partners grow numerically, engaging an increasing number of people and communities. They are also intensified and deepened in terms of their content. The partner networks are effective collectives for advancing the implementation and scaling up of education for sustainable development. In addition, their showcasing of good practice is crucial in identifying projects and initiatives that can be scaled up.

45. Awarded for the first time in 2015, the UNESCO-Japan Prize on Education for Sustainable Development, funded by the Government of Japan, honours outstanding projects by individuals, institutions and organizations relating to education for sustainable development, based on three distinct selection criteria: transformation, integration and innovation. The Prize is an efficient vehicle for giving recognition and visibility to people and organizations that have been promoting education for sustainable development on the ground. What makes the Prize unique is its programme approach, which continues after the award ceremony, with support for activities and regular follow-up with laureates, including the organization of national and regional events.

E. Monitoring the implementation of education for sustainable development

46. Measuring the impact of actions is one of the stakes of the 2030 Agenda. The global indicator for Sustainable Development Goal target 4.7, adopted by the General Assembly in July 2016, assesses the extent to which education for sustainable development and global citizenship education are integrated into national education policies, school curricula, teacher training and student assessments. Target 4.7 emphasizes the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, closely aligned with the vision of the 2030 Agenda.

Measuring and monitoring its progress has specific challenges, and UNESCO continuously gathers data that can be used to monitor progress in education for sustainable development and related approaches.

47. Recent analysis in the 2016 Global Education Monitoring Report, entitled "Education for people and planet: Creating sustainable futures for all", indicates that mainstreaming education for sustainable development and global citizenship education into curricula remains a challenge. For example, while 73 per cent of 78 countries with data included the key term "sustainable development", only 36 per cent included the notion of climate change. The terms "global citizenship" and "global identity" appeared in the curricula of only 42 per cent of the countries.

48. As the principles of the 1974 UNESCO Recommendation concerning education for international understanding, cooperation and peace and education relating to human rights and fundamental freedoms are closely aligned with Sustainable Development Goal target 4.7, countries' reports on the implementation of the Recommendation have been considered to be the main source of data for the global indicator of this target. Every four years, UNESCO invites member States to submit these progress reports. Five reporting cycles have been conducted so far. The sixth cycle was launched in 2016 following the adoption of a revised questionnaire to obtain data relevant to the global indicator for target 4.7. National reports were submitted by 83 countries. The data obtained will also be used to report on target 12.8 on sustainable lifestyles and target 13.3 on climate change education.

49. In 2015, UNESCO commissioned a review of past country reports on the implementation of the 1974 Recommendation for the reporting cycles for which data are available (cycles 3 to 5)[5] to identify the extent to which education for sustainable development and global citizenship education are mainstreamed across reporting countries. The result of the analysis of a total of 94 reports (37 from 2005-2008 and 57 from 2009-2016) showed that more than half of the responding countries have integrated education for sustainable development into their national education policies. It also indicated that while education for sustainable development is increasingly becoming mandatory in the curriculum, further efforts are required to incorporate education for sustainable development into teacher education.

50. UNESCO is also collaborating with the International Association for the Evaluation for Educational Achievement on the International Civic and Citizenship Education Study to monitor progress in knowledge and understanding, skills, beliefs, attitudes and behaviours relating to education for sustainable development and global citizenship education.

51. UNESCO is sharing information and data on the progress of Sustainable Development Goal target 4.7 through a dedicated web page entitled "Learning to live together sustainably (SDG4.7): Trends and Progress". The page provides policymakers, concerned education stakeholders and the public with information that can help monitor global progress on Sustainable Development Goal target 4.7. It features information drawn from regional, multi-country or national data sets and other established instruments, provides evidence and links to data sets relating to progress on target 4.7 and includes key findings of UNESCO studies and data analyses.

[5] See *Historical efforts to implement the UNESCO 1974 Recommendation on Education in light of 3 SDGs Targets*. Available from http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0024/002472/247275E.pdf.

IV. Ways forward

A. Future of education for sustainable development

52. The current framework of the Global Action Programme will come to an end in 2019. To prepare for the next stage of the implementation of education for sustainable development, UNESCO has initiated a series of consultation processes and launched a series of symposiums on the future of education for sustainable development to address its challenges in relation to changes taking place in the world. The series consists of four symposiums on the following topics: sustainable choices; what to teach and how; education for sustainable development in the context of poverty; and future economic environment and sustainable production and consumption. To reflect on the results of these symposiums, a wider consultation with key partners and education for sustainable development stakeholders, and consultations with member States, are planned for 2018. The outcomes of the symposiums and consultations will be synthesized in a position paper to be submitted to the UNESCO governing bodies to inform their decisions regarding the future of the Programme and the direction of the education for sustainable development programmes of UNESCO.

53. UNESCO will thus ensure that education for sustainable development is at the forefront of efforts to achieve sustainable development worldwide. As member States' commitment is crucial for the further mainstreaming of education for sustainable development, their involvement in the process of designing a future strategy for education for sustainable development that reflects their specific needs and priorities has to be encouraged and supported.

B. Recommendations

54. To date, UNESCO has promoted education for sustainable development as vital and necessary to providing the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that empower learners to take informed decisions and responsible actions for environmental integrity, economic viability and a just society. To overcome barriers to living sustainably, it is essential to encourage and cultivate creativity and collaboration across disciplines. Efforts have been undertaken to mainstream education for sustainable development into education policies, curricula and teacher training. Climate change, disaster risk reduction and biodiversity have been the thematic focus of the education for sustainable development programmes of UNESCO. Policymakers, institutions, educators, youth and local communities are the target groups of the Global Action Programme.

55. Many of these directions and strategic decisions remain valid, but their relevance and effectiveness may need to be reviewed in relation to emerging developments in the world, including, but not limited to:

(a) *Sustainable development as a way of life*: young people in particular approach the issue of sustainability as part of their choice of a specific way of life and with a commitment to certain values. Education for sustainable development, implemented as an education on specific sustainability challenges, does not speak to them effectively;

(b) *Meaningful engagement of youth*: finding new ways to empower and mobilize youth is a recurring necessity in education for sustainable development, as their needs and circumstances are changing continuously. In particular, in line with the UNESCO Operational Strategy on Youth (2014-2021), the role of youth must be redefined. Young people must no longer be seen as the beneficiaries of actions, but

as meaningfully engaged actors, change-makers and partners in their design, implementation and monitoring. For education for sustainable development to be relevant, it must constantly be adapted according to the input of young people;

(c) *Education for knowledge and skills versus education for values and empowerment*: current education systems, with their focus on individual subjects and specialized knowledge, are not adapted to the task of empowerment for sustainable development. Education for sustainable development and its holistic and humanistic approaches must further strive to transform education beyond its knowledge and skills focus and promote values and attitudes conducive to sustainable choices;

(d) *Technological advances and education*: in the age of the Internet, learning can take place anywhere and anytime, with the learners themselves becoming the central agent of obtaining and analysing information. This calls for revisiting the role of formal education and, more specifically, of teachers, to focus more on the development of critical thinking skills and of the "whole person";

(e) *Technological solutions for sustainable development*: technological advances, such as smart cities, are beginning to resolve some of the long-standing issues of sustainable development, supporting or even surpassing some of the educational efforts to change people, their attitudes and their behaviours;

(f) *Citizenship approach and the importance of community*: in many countries, education for sustainable development messages are becoming increasingly integrated into citizenship actions, which take place outside the formal education system. The life sphere in and for the community, beyond the classroom, is becoming a major action platform for education for sustainable development;

(g) *Developing and developed countries*: choosing a sustainable way of life does not necessarily have the same meaning in different economic contexts, owing to poverty, high youth unemployment and other factors. The promotion of education for sustainable development must take these differences into account;

(h) *Sustainable Development Goals*: education is crucial for the successful implementation of all 17 Sustainable Development Goals. Therefore, UNESCO may need to broaden the perspective of its current education for sustainable development programme, which has focused on some specific areas, such as climate change, disaster risk reduction and biodiversity. A wider and closer partnership with key stakeholders may also be required.

V. Conclusion

56. Education is the key to building a better and more sustainable future for present and future generations.[6] To implement and achieve the Education 2030 Framework for Action agenda, sustained and increased commitment and action from Governments and all partners are required.

57. As a key component and enabler of sustainable development, education for sustainable development has progressed constantly. It is spearheading a growing movement of learners, educators, decision makers and other stakeholders who recognize the importance of collective responsibility in addressing global challenges and building more sustainable and resilient societies.

[6] See also Worldwatch Institute, *State of the World — EarthEd: Rethinking Education on a Changing Planet* (2017).

58. Learning to live sustainably is a long-term proposition requiring everyone's attention and involvement. To move towards a sustainable, just and inclusive world, member States and other concerned stakeholders should continue to scale up education for sustainable development action by implementing the five priority action areas of the Global Action Programme — policy, learning environments, educators, youth, and local communities — and promoting and supporting education for sustainable development in all countries.